



The University of Chicago
Libraries



A PLEA FOR A MISERABLE WORLD.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS, AUGUST 9, 1820,

AT THE

LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE

OF

THE BUILDING ERECTING FOR THE USE OF

THE

CHARITY INSTITUTION.

BY DANIEL A. CLARK,

Pastor of the First Church and Society in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Isaiah liv. 13.—"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

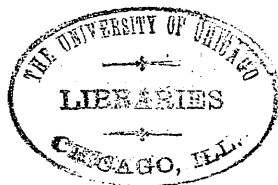
Isaiah xxx. 20.—"Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more; but thine eyes shall see thy teachers."

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY EZRA LINCOLN.

1820.

BV660
C62



SERMON.

II. KINGS, VI. 1-3.

“And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take there every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants, and he answered, I will go.”

ABOUT nine hundred years before Christ, there was at Jericho or Gilgal, some place near to Jordan, a school of the prophets, at the head of which was the worthy and venerable Elisha. The government of Israel was in the hands of Jehoram, a degenerate son of the impious Ahab. It was a time of general corruption; the prophets were treated with neglect; and the honors due to God were given to an idol. Still the prophets were employed in promoting the worship of God, and their number increased till they had occasion to enlarge the place of their tent. In the simple and interesting history of this enterprise, we learn, that the prophets, though poor, and not held in very high estimation in *that degenerate age*, were pious, honest, and industrious.

They seem to have dwelt together, that under the tuition of their honored father, they might become prepared to teach and to prophecy in Israel and the neighboring countries. They were, no doubt, at this time frequently consulted by the leaders of Israel, notwithstanding their degeneracy and corruption.

I presume it can need no apology, if I glance from this school of the prophets to the education of a gospel ministry. O could I, in the transition, bring with me into gospel times the faith of Elisha, and transfer into my audience the zeal of his associates! Then the building we propose to erect would soon rise, and the church, down to the latest ages, feel and rejoice in the benevolent enterprise. I shall take occasion to remark in the

First Place, That, up to this moment, very inadequate provision is made for replenishing the gospel ministry. This treasure is committed to earthen vessels; ministers are dying men. When we have served the church a few days, we go the way of all the earth, and the places that knew us, know us no more forever. But the churches must still have a ministry; and that ministry be composed of men, not angels; men educated by human means, not inspired with miraculous gifts. Hence there must be made a perpetual effort to create this supply of pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. But the present ratio of supply is entirely inadequate to the exigences of the church. On this subject there needs no other argument but a statement of facts, of which there could be presented a list that would move any but a heart of iron. A very few of these facts, drawn from the very best authorities, I will take the liberty to mention.

The nine millions of souls in these United States, have the service, it is believed, of only about two thousand five hundred ministers who are competent to preach the gospel. But if instead of this number we had nine thousand, each must then have the care of one thousand souls. But in a large proportion of our country, owing to the scattered state of its population, five hundred souls would be an extensive charge. Hence, nine thousand ministers, in addition to all we have, would be but a bare supply for this district of the church of Christ. But this number would equal that of the ministers educated in times past in all the colleges in the United States in nearly twenty years. While, then, we might be preparing this supply, many ministers will go to their graves, and others be disabled, and our population will have almost doubled.

We are assured, that in the three southernmost of the Atlantic States, containing perhaps a million and a half of souls, there are but one hundred and ten competent ministers; while in one district of South Carolina, containing nine hundred square miles, there is but one place of worship, and that not used, and not one Christian church or minister of any denomination. In the whole of Indiana, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Illinois, Michigan and Missouri, a district of country large enough for a continent, and containing at least three hundred and fifty thousand souls, there are not twenty competent ministers; of course, but one to more than twenty thousand. In East Tennessee, there are in seventeen counties more than one hundred thousand, while fourteen of these counties are without one regular minister of the gospel. In the West of Virginia, in eight counties, are forty-seven thousand souls

connected with no religious society ; and four whole counties without any religious institutions whatever. In another district there are fifty-three thousand souls, in another twenty thousand, and in another still sixty thousand, all in about the same deplorable condition. In Pennsylvania there are extensive districts in which there never was a school, where more than half the adults can neither read nor write, many never saw a bible nor any book, nor ever heard a sermon. One district of forty thousand souls, has but one fixed pastor. In the State of New-York there could be settled immediately, were they to be found, two hundred ministers. And if we should survey the limits of New England, we should see some dreary moral deserts. In the two oldest counties of New-Hampshire, there are about forty-five towns without a ministry. But I have not time to enlarge. Allowing that these statements may be in many respects not exactly correct, still they are evidence of a wide and fearful desolation. If but the one half is true, it presents to the eye of charity a moral landscape of wide and fearful ruins.

If you could read the epistles, that pour these complaints into our ears, you would weep if you ever did, and would die with shame, or would rise to a tone of charity that many have not reached. Now these desolate places must be cultivated, these wastes of death must be fertilized. But where are they to find a ministry ? The common resources are utterly inadequate to this home supply. But in the mean time we need missionaries to send to the heathen. Of these there are six hundred millions who pay their supreme homage to stocks and stones. The United States, it is computed, ought to dispatch to their help at least two thousand

missionaries, *and will do it*, if the time has come, as we presume it has, when the Christian community, with the charter of eternal life in their hands, can sleep no longer.

And still the ministry must be replenished at home. If the probability is, that we shall feel it our duty soon to support among the heathen, a number of missionaries greater than that of the ministers now within our limits, pray from what resource can we obtain that enormous supply? To export the whole of our ministry, would render our own country the valley of death. It is impossible not to see that the Christian churches have neglected their duty too long. We must be more thoroughly awake soon, or nothing but a boundless desolation stares us in the face. The wastes of death are already so wide, that they almost outmeasure the hope of cultivation, and they are daily augmenting their horrid circumference. Our children, *when we shall have done all that we can*, are very likely to be among those who shall cry for the bread of life, and perish before their cry is heard. When they shall have attended our funeral, they may retire to the West, and there pine away in their sins, while there lights upon their ears no sound of mercy, nor their eyes see upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth. We may miss our children in heaven, and know then, but know too late, that they have perished through our negligence. While we thus weep over the fearful delinquencies in the ministry of reconciliation, it is cheering to know,

II. That we have the *materials* and the *means* of an abundant supply. When I speak of the *materials*, my

eye is searching among the churches for the happy subjects of our late revivals. Many of them I perceive are in the vale of poverty, and would rejoice to be useful, if they might presume to hope, that God would employ them in his service. They are waiting, it is presumed, till this institution rise, and some kind voice invite them to come and take sanctuary under its covert. If they could equip themselves they would ; or if they dared to hope that they were worthy, they would pour their cry into our ears, and give us no rest till we had made them the recipients of our charity. A few years since, if we had been awake to this interest, it would not have been easy to find materials. God had suffered our youth to grow up in unbelief, and thus had chastised us for our negligence. But, anticipating the close of our portentous slumber, his mercy has waked, and prepared the rising generation to be educated, and employed to lead to conquest and to glory the sacramental hosts of God's elect. If we were prepared, and would enter to-morrow one hundred upon our opening list of beneficiaries, it is presumed they could readily be found, and their hearts would leap for joy to know that they might be equipt for the good work of pointing sinners to the Savior.

And we have abundantly the *means*. If each person in the United States would give one cent a year for this purpose, it would amount to ninety thousand dollars annually, a sum the interest of which would discharge annually and forever the expenses of more than fifty beneficiaries, or if the principal should be expended, it would support for one year nine hundred. If each church member in the United States should contribute to this object annually one dollar, it would probably raise the

sum of four hundred thousand dollars, and support four thousand students. Most congregations beside supporting the ministry, could defray the expences of one student annually, and thus furnish every seven years one minister. In one timely shower of rain, God could restore all we had expended for years ; or by warding off one storm, could save for us a far greater amount. The man who could lose an ox every year, and not be poor, or could bear the expense of one fit of sickness, could pour the price of that ox, or the expenses of that visitation, into the treasury of the Lord, and not be poor. But if half the number who *could* make this sacrifice, *would* do it, and devote the avails to this object, we could very soon tenfold the number of our ministers, and make the desert and the solitary place glad. If one can spend idly, in the course of the year; ten days, and not be poor, he could employ those days, and not be poor, in earning something for this benevolent purpose. But if half who actually make this sacrifice should thus employ their time, the treasury of the Lord would soon be full. If the youth who annually spend ten dollars in mere extravagancies, would give the one half of this expenditure to educate pious and worthy young men for the gospel ministry, there would be made no farther calls upon the Christian public. If farmers would cultivate each a quarter acre of their waste lands in the best manner, and give the proceeds to the Lord, it would probably tenfold the sum that has usually been given for all the benevolent purposes for which contributions have been made. If the extra crops of the present year, were devoted to the Lord, and expended in thrusting forth laborers into his harvest, the fields that are white would soon be gathered in. Were that sum saved,

which is annually lost by mere negligence, it would forever supply the churches with a well-educated ministry, would furnish an army of evangelists, and would fertilize the wastes of a moral world. Instead of its being the fact, as the covetous daily plead, that our resources are exhausted, they are really yet untouched. The man can hardly be found, who has denied himself a comfort to revive a famishing world. And, as it will always happen, those who complain the *most* have done the *least*, and most of those who complain, have done nothing. The man who loves to do good with his wealth, is attentive to every call of charity, and has made every benevolent institution feel the effects of his liberality and his prayers, is grieved that he does so little, and has never been heard to say, that the calls upon his charity have become so frequent as to be oppressive. That we have the means abundantly, of making exertions that we have never made, none can doubt.

III. It is our duty to use these means, and supply ourselves and others with a well educated ministry. The duty of preparing *ourselves* a ministry admits of no controversy. If a congregation in each thirty or forty years wears out a minister in their service, it is but honest to calculate, that such a congregation should, in every such period, in addition to supporting the ministry already in their employ, educate one, that the list may be kept full. The only question is, Shall we provide a surplus, for those who are destitute of a ministry, and cannot be expected to supply themselves? A very little reflection, it would seem, must render this matter plain. If we look about us upon the waste places, we shall feel that we are imperiously urged to provide them

a supply of pastors. There are churches very near us, which have been so unhappy as to lose the blessing they once enjoyed. Perhaps the surviving members had no partnership in the sin that stripped them of the ministry. They are begging for help, would do all in their power to provide themselves the gospel and its ordinances; but when they have done all they can do, they still hunger for the bread of life. The Domestic Missionary Society, instituted for their relief, have assured us, that, although their funds have been low, much of the time since their organization, they have done nothing, *because men could not be found suitable for the service.* When I read of this fact, it had on my ear the effect of a dying groan, and stole through the heart like the cold stream of death. Said I to myself, Are the churches that our fathers planted, which they watered with their tears, in whose bosom they expired, and in whose prosperity, though now in heaven, they have still a deep and unalienable interest—are they to become extinct? Is that covenant broken, which it was promised should be perpetual? Had their Redeemer said, “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me,” and has that city been demolished, and have those walls been thrown down? Have the children who there received the seal of the covenant, no promise left on which to hang their hopes? If we are to do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith, to help them re-establish in their temples the ministry of reconciliation is the first duty of piety, and the first dictate of humanity. They hunger and thirst after the bread of life, have received a pledge that God will sanctify them through his truth, and cannot be denied the blessing requisite to the fulfilment of this promise.

Or if we turn our eye to those who have gone to the Western woods, we shall see opened before us a field which we dare not refuse to cultivate. They have been used to the blessings of a Christian land, have heard and loved the church-going bell, have enjoyed schools, academies and libraries, and been revived by the ordinances, and must they now be excluded forever from these privileges? They cannot educate for themselves a ministry, nor build in the wilderness the unnumbered conveniences they have left behind. They have turned their eye to us, and if we refuse them help we cover them with unmingled despair. They have thus before them none but the comfortless prospect of seeing their children become wild men, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them; nor this the least; for, without the gospel, there is nothing before their dear devoted offspring but the blackness of darkness forever. The mother, that had devoted her children to God, and has gone with them into the Western wilds, must now die crushed with the tremendous thought, that she became a mother, merely that she might people the realms of death. Already she has hung her harp upon the willows, and there it must hang, till some kind missionary enter the door of her cabin, and wipe away her tears; and this missionary *we* must educate. Ten long years must still roll away before he arrives, and she in the mean time, bleached by the frosts of age, trembles on the brink of the grave, but dare not die till her hopes are accomplished, and her children saved.

And who are these inhabitants of the forest? They are our fathers and mothers, our brethren and sisters, our children, our friends and neighbors. They were born in the houses we occupy, have gone from our families

and our bosom, were the companions of our childhood and our youth. We took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company. Hence the cry they utter sounds in our ears loud and eloquent as the shrieks of death. If we do *not hear* nor *help* them, then the mother has forgot her sucking child, and feels no compassion for the son of her womb. Do you say, They *shall* have a gospel ministry? My heart responds, *They shall.*

But I hear too the voice of the savage, sounding from the bosom of that trackless forest still beyond. And there is in that cry a wild and native eloquence, "You have stripped us of our hunting ground, all in life that we held dear; you have corrupted our morals; our tribes, already incalculably diminished, have nothing before them but the dreary idea of being swallowed up, unless it be the more fearful apprehension of perishing forever in our sins. Once we were the heirs of your soil, we now only ask to die the heirs of that salvation, which is revealed to you in your bibles." A cry like this has been uttered and is heard. Already the heralds of salvation have gone to look up the remnants of their depopulated tribes, and point them to a Savior. Their sun is setting in the west, and we should give evidence that we had their unpyting *nature* as well as their *soil*, were we willing to see it go down in total darkness. If the few that remain may live forever, it alleviates the retrospect of their wrongs, and creates one luminous spot in the Egyptian cloud that hangs over the place of their fathers' sepulchres. I would give any price for their forgiveness and their blessing; and it cheers my heart, that my country is beginning to pay the long arrears which are due to that injured people.

Now suppose, that not merely from the West, but from other heathen lands, we hear a cry for the gospel. If the millions of India ask us to send them back in bibles and missionaries the wealth we have imported from their shores, can we say to them, "Be ye warmed and be ye fed?" If Palestine, and the shores of the Mediterranean, are seen pining with spiritual famine, and should beg us to send them that bread of heaven which their forefathers sent to ours, would there be no eloquence in that prayer? Or if Africa, poor ill-fated Africa, should beg us to make them a sabbath, and build them a sanctuary, and send them a bible and a missionary; would they deserve no answer? Or if they should be too much oppressed to utter any cry, and we should only know that their highest deity is a serpent, and their richest hope the repose of the grave, can we pass by on the other side? Their sons have served our fathers and us; we have taught them nothing but our vices; and if now, when the promise is about to be fulfilled, and Ethiopia is stretching out her hands unto God, we should refuse them the gospel, how can we answer for the stripes, and chains, and servitude and famine, with which we have taxed them? What defence can we make when their compassionate Redeemer shall advocate their cause.

Poor Africa must share, though late, the blessings of the gospel; it must be sent to the shores of Palestine, must be propagated in India, must sound through every isle of the ocean, and must go, with its stores of blessings, to every section of this dark and desolate world. But it cannot be sent; the miseries that it would alleviate must remain without a cure, till there is a great augmentation of the army of evangelists. Hence we *must*

use the materials and employ the means in our power to equip young men for this service. And every year's delay will bury millions who have never heard of Christ, and have no faith in his blood. Hence we are urged to the work, by all that is fleeting in time, by all that is valuable in the soul, by all that is bright and rich in the thought of heaven, and by all that is dark and dreary in the idea of hopeless perdition.

IV. Union in the Christian world will insure success, Said the young men to the aged and venerable Elisha, "Be content, we pray thee, and go with thy servants." There was union; and very soon the trees of Jordan fell, and the school of the prophets was builded. How simple, how interesting, and how full of instruction is this page of sacred story! How the venerable prophet, as he bore up a beam from the wood, evinced his faith in the covenant, nerved the young men to exertion, and magnified his office! Let the Christian world unite, and the work we propose will be easy. When all shall do a little, none will be burdened. We can educate teachers for ourselves, and furnish a surplus for the outcasts of Israel. And to do it all we hardly need deny ourselves a single comfort. We have only to gather up the fragments and let nothing be lost, and they will feed millions of the hungry. When we can *unite* in the effort, it will be easy to do all that *duty* and that *benevolence* require. The waste places will be repaired, the destitute will be furnished with the bread of heaven, the heathen will be tamed to civility, and will burn their temples and their idols, Ethiopia will stretch out her hands unto God, the posterity of Abraham will own their allegiance to their Savior, and be again engrafted into their own olive tree, the Turk and the Arab will

exchange the mosque and the Koran for the sanctuary and the Bible, the Tartar will pitch permanently his tent about the house of the missionary, and Jesus, the long neglected Redeemer, will receive the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

And there is nothing visionary in all this. It is all promised, it is all expected, it will soon transpire ; and the man who will not believe, like the infidel of Samaria, may die in the gate, while the perishing inhabitants of a world are rushing to the banquet of the Lamb. The angel, flying through the midst of heaven, and having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, will publish it to every kindred and nation and tongue and people. This angel is the gospel ministry, and this prediction is fast accomplishing.

Will any ask, What has all this to do with the present occasion? The answer is obvious. You have met to lay the foundation of an institution, designed to recruit the ranks of the gospel ministry. There are many who would become soldiers of the cross, if any would equip them. The subscribers to this generous fund, and the founders of this noble edifice, have in view this single object. It is an institution, in some respects, like no other that ever rose ; designed to bestow gratis a liberal education upon those who will enter the gospel ministry, but who are too indigent to defray the expense of their own induction. It has been founded and must rise by charity. And every man who shall bring a beam or a rock, who shall lay a stone or drive a nail, from love to the kingdom of Christ, shall not fail of his reward. I believe this institution will collect about it the friends of the Lord Jesus, will be fed by their philanthropy and watered by their prayers, and will yet become a fountain pouring forth its streams to fertilize the boundless

wastes of a miserable world. In vision I see it among the first institutions of our land, the younger sister and the best friend of our theological seminaries, the centre of our education societies, the solace of poverty, the joy of the destitute, and the hope and the salvation of perishing millions.

Connected as it is with the recruit of the ministry, the salvation of souls, and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, it will rise, and will soon have a claim upon the charity, the prayers, and the tears of the whole Christian community. If some who may aid in the work have other motives than the glory of God, still I will hope, and I *do believe*, that the great mass of the donors, have their eye upon the future glories of Emmanuel, and are erecting this institution as a monument to his honor. And having put their hand to the plough, they will not look back. They will still enlarge their charities, and increase their hopes, till this sacred spot, where they are erecting the school, has attracted the gaze, and gladdened the aching hearts of believers in every destitute section of our land.

The subject now makes its appeal to all classes of men, to all the tender relationships of life, and to all the sympathies of human nature. Its first appeal is *to the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ*. They are the sacred depositaries of divine truth, and are obligated to perpetuate the ministry of reconciliation. Here you may educate your children, born in your late revivals, and committed to your care to train up for the Lord. Here you see revived the hope and the promise of your future prosperity. "Thy children shall all be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Here we hope will be educated many of your future pastors. You have here an additional pledge, that God

has not forsaken you, and that he will never leave the vine he has planted in this western world, to be trodden down by the boar of the wood, or wasted by the lapse of time, or the ravages of death. "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers."

And *congregations* have a singular interest. You have had just occasion to fear that you might one day become waste places, through a lack of pastors. But the thought must be dreadful, whether you regard a *future* life, or only the *present*. When the lips which now address you in your respective sanctuaries, are cold in death, and you are met to pay the last offices of affection to your deceased pastor, how it would darken the glooms of that evening, and lessen your hope of salvation, to apprehend a famine of the word. But the most judicious, till the church waked to the duty of educating herself a ministry, feared all this. The increase of our population, and the urgent claims of the heathen and the destitute, seemed to leave us, till we discovered this remedy, nothing to look for but ultimate desertion and ruin. For with the gospel, it was known there would desert us the sabbath, and all those institutions which are the glory of our land. Hence the very infidel, who has no hope for himself and his children beyond the grave, but would have them civil, and decent, and wealthy, and happy in the present life, has a deep interest in this institution.

But the subject addresses itself specially to *believers*. You love the Lord Jesus Christ, and love his church, and have a deep interest in whatever has respect to his honor. And the eternal life of souls is near your heart. If this institution then promises to promote either of these objects, it will be dear to your hearts. And

you know the ministry is appointed for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. Of course an institution designed to enlarge this ministry, is connected intimately with your best interests, your highest pleasures, and your richest hopes. And as you shall see its walls rise, we shall presume on your co-operation and your prayers.

The inhabitants of this whole *vicinity* have a deep interest in this institution. It will not *confine* its blessings to you, but it will offer you its benefits with the fewest inconveniences. If God has given your children his grace, you have here an opportunity to educate them at your own threshold. And if you are too poor to purchase the privilege, still this institution opens to you its doors. Nor is the thought to be despised, that here there will be collected those who have an interest at the throne of grace, and whose daily supplications must bring a blessing upon the whole vicinity.

To *parents* this subject cannot want interest. If there should be no prospect that our own children be here prepared for usefulness, still the institution will stand, we trust, when our bodies have mouldered in the grave, and be a nursery for our children's children down through many generations. In an age like this, pregnant with such high and holy promises to the rising generation, it is a blessing to be a parent. We may have higher hopes than any age that has gone by, that God will pour out his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring.

The *friends of correct sentiment* will rejoice to see a school of the prophets opened among a people who believe the truth, and in a neighbourhood where there is a pious and orthodox ministry, where prevail the doctrines of our forefathers, and where the assurance is so

strong, that these same funds shall never be perverted from their original design. We have seen error attempting to roll its desolating flood through our churches. We have seen prostituted to the vile purpose of disseminating false doctrines, funds that were consecrated to the interests of truth. We have seen the Redeemer degraded to a mere attribute, an angel, a man and even a sinner, by the very charities that were intended to give him a throne in every heart, and an altar in every house. We have seen fountains, opened by the liberality of a pious ancestry, so poisoned, that every stream they issued carried sterility and death through the provinces they were designed to fertilize. Next to the grace of God, and relying on his blessing, the best means of cleansing those waters, or damming these streams, is to prepare for the churches a full supply of scribes well instructed in the kingdom of God. And the hope could hardly be stronger, that the funds here deposited for that purpose, will be forever held sacred to the design for which they were consecrated.

The *poor* will feel a special interest in every transaction relative to this institution. The fund subscribed is exclusively for them, and can never be diverted from their use. Here then is one institution where envy can have no employ. The rich would not be willing that the christian public should educate their children, they would prefer to purchase the benefit. Once it was said, "To the poor the gospel is *preached*," now the poor may become qualified to preach the gospel. They may dispense the blessings which it has been their province to receive, may teach where it was their privilege to learn, may become *beneficiaries* to an extent that shall qualify them to become *benefactors*. Here, if you cannot educate your own children, and God has given them his

grace, and they are otherwise qualified, you may send them to live by the temple and feed upon its offerings, till they are prepared to be prophets in Israel. O it must carry hope and joy into the habitations of poverty to day, to know that there is laid the foundation of an institution, destined to pour its blessings exclusively upon the indigent ! This is a blessing that has lain so beyond their hopes as to have hardly been an object of their prayers. Before they have called God has answered. Hence, to the full extent of their power they will pour into this fund the little streams of their charity, and will watch the progress of its rising honors and its growing interests with paternal fondness and solicitude.

Nor will the rich have any feelings but those of pleasure. All other institutions have opened their doors to them, while this one, which promises promotion to the children of their poorer neighbors, will receive their patronage and their prayers. Nor can they know but their posterity may be poor, and one day hang their last hope on the promised aid of this kind and benevolent institution.

I cannot suppress my wish to recommend this institution to the patronage of *females*. They have recently signalized themselves as the friends of angels and of the gospel ministry. Many an ambassador of the cross owes his courage and his success, to their charities and their prayers. Here they will have opportunity, I hope, to see some of their noblest wishes gratified. Here they may consecrate their charities, and toward this place may turn their eye when they pray, and find their spirits cheered, their prayers answered, and their hopes accomplished. In the zeal they show for these objects, they evince that they know how to appreciate their own com-

forts. The gospel, in addition to the promise of eternal life, renders them free, respected, and happy, in the life that now is.

This institution has a claim upon the *patriot*. No country is so blessed as when science and religion blend their influence, and shower upon society their united blessing. But this school, more than any other, will tend to that balance of influence, and approximate us toward that equality, which is ever the basis of a government like ours. It will raise the poor, widen the bonds of affection, and vastly increase the amount of happiness. We hope to enlist in this benevolent design the whole aggregate of patriotism within the compass of its influence.

The *ministers of Christ* will say, God speed, to an enterprise calculated to increase the laborers in the vineyard. We shall thus give evidence to the world, that all we say respecting the scarcity of ministers we fully believe; for if things were otherwise, we could not act more unwisely for our own interest than to thus raise up rivals, who might rob us of our parishes and our bread. How it must gladden our aged fathers, to see an institution rise, designed to prolong the cry of glad tidings, which begins to die away upon their palsied lips. When they can address sinners no more, and can only cast an eye over the valley of vision, and survey the vast fields of the slain, it will rejoice their hearts to see other prophets taking their stand by the side of that valley, intending to prolong the prophecy till the dry bones have become living men. When the aged Elisha went with the young prophets to the banks of Jordan, to cheer them in their toils, and aid them with his counsels and his prayers, he showed a strong regard to the future welfare of Isra-

el, and deeply engraved his memory upon the hearts of the young prophets. Unless I greatly mistake the feelings of my aged fathers, their eyes will be bright with joy while they see these walls go up. They will fall on their knees, and spread their hands toward heaven, and give us their dying blessing; and may their prayer return into their own bosom.

If now, in my concluding remarks, I should address you as *Christians*, I would say, This institution, if permitted to rise, (and we look to *God* for this permission) and if not grossly perverted from its original design, is connected intimately with the dispersion of that Egyptian darkness which has so long brooded over an apostate world; with all that is interesting in the rescue of the idolater from his gods, the Papist from his relics and his saints, the Jew from his Talmud, the Mahometan from his Koran, the African from his chains, and the assassin from his pistol and his knife. You have enlightened views of your Maker, have a bible, a sabbath, and a sanctuary, can feast at the table of the Lord, and entertain hopes of a rich and happy immortality. I plead for those who are immortal like you, and like you must die and be judged; but have never learned the true character of God, nor heard the story of a Savior, nor have discovered any escape from the glooms of the sepulchre; who look to that home as the seat of perpetual darkness, forgetfulness and silence; who have never kept a day of rest, and can hope to remit their toils their cares and their miseries, only when their heads shall slumber on the turf. Religion would make them as happy as you, and heaven as blessed.

But I do not appeal exclusively to *piety*, but to *all the tender feelings of humanity*. When you cast your eye

over the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty, every aspect of wretchedness which you descrie gives importance to the transactions of this day. We plead for the unhappy, for the lost, and the miserable. I think I see, without the aid of inspiration, a band of missionaries, educated in this school, issuing forth to chase misery from this polluted world.

You are a father, are loved by your children, and cherished with that tenderness which your infirmities and your age require; we plead for fathers, who in their declining years are deserted by their children, and left to perish by the frosts of age, who are borne to the bed of some river, that they may be swept away by the tide, and become the food of the shark or the alligator.

You are a mother, and perhaps a widow, and your children would shrink from no sacrifice that might prolong your life, or soothe your pains or your cares; I plead for mothers whose offspring are monsters, and can force them at the point of the spear upon the flames that are consuming the corpse of a husband, and can drown their dying shrieks in acclamations of infernal joy.

You was left in your infancy an orphan, and have found in this inhospitable world a guardian and a friend, who has nursed your childhood, and watched your youth, and reared you to respectable and promising manhood; I plead for orphans, who have no home but in the place of skulls, no house but the house of silence, where sleep the ashes of a merciless mother, no friend but death, who stops the rage of hunger, blunts the edge of care, extinguishes the fire of affection and hope, and finds the wretched a covert and a calm amid the clogs of the valley.

If the relief of miseries like these has the least connection with the events of this day, these events will have some claim upon the sympathy of every feeling heart. If we might only hope, that by means of this institution, *one more missionary*, than would otherwise be educated, will enter the fields of labor, and go to some *one province* of this dark world, and there create a light that shall guide home to heaven *one benighted soul*, it would be worth all the pains and the wealth that shall be expended in founding this school. "The redemption of the soul is precious and it ceaseth forever." You might cover that field with silver and gold, and if the whole would buy off one soul from perdition it would be well expended. And I must believe that more than *one missionary* will be sent, and more than *one sinner be redeemed*, by the means that are here providing; and in the boundless joys thus generated, shall find all the reward I wish, for any plea I can offer, or any exertions I can make, to advance this interest.

If we are utterly mistaken, and any feel otherwise, we rejoice that the field of labor is large. They may glorify God in some other way, may feed the poor, dispense the scriptures, support the missionaries already educated, or educate *others* in some *other school*. Or if any will neither aid this charity nor any other, and their consciences will approve of their neutrality, they shall receive no reproach from us if they do nothing. If we are disposed to do good, and our motive is the glory of God, it will ill become us to reproach others. To their own master they stand or fall.

In the mean time, I hope that those who cannot conscientiously labor with us, will utter no reproaches, nor make any effort to dam the streams of charity that might

flow to this centre, and issue hence to carry their fertilizing influence through the wastes of this miserable world. If once the object was good, it is so still. If unhappily some may not have had in view the divine glory in their most zealous efforts, still the character of the institution is not changed, nor its importance diminished, nor its claims cancelled. I close with one remark to the friends of this institution.

How important is it, that we suitably prize and improve the ministry established among us. What will it avail us that we have pitied the destitute, and the heathen, if at last we die impenitent, and sink below them in perdition. We may send them the bible and the ambassador of peace, and still neglect that book and that ministry, and die unsanctified. The ministry can be a blessing to the heathen, only as it may become the means of their conversion ; hence to feel anxious for them, and found an institution with a view to furnish them a ministry, and yet under the full advantages of that ministry live without God and without Christ in the world, is to act with unpardonable disregard of our first, best duty. It would be a fearful event, if finally we should lift up our voice and weep, and say, " My mother's children made me the keeper of the vineyard, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Each of us has a soul that must live forever, that must be washed in a Savior's blood or must endure the terrors of his wrath ; to save this soul is our first concern, and we may wake to its interests too late. If we should give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burned, and yet lack that charity to which salvation is promised, we should die fools at the last. It is true that the religion of the gospel is benevolent ; it is true that the covetous man is an idol,

ater, and has not eternal life abiding in him, but there is also a religion which all evaporates in care for the safety of others, which has little to do with the closet, or the heart, or the bible, or heaven. O let this day bring us all to our knees. Let the walls of this edifice be bedewed with the tears of repentance, and may we all be pillars or polished stones in the mystical temple, which Christ is erecting, that when the top-stone is laid we may be there to aid the shout, 'grace, grace unto it. "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

*A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF THE
CHARITABLE INSTITUTION IN AMHERST.*

THE Charitable Institution founded in Amherst owes its origin to the pious zeal of certain members of the Board of Trustees of Amherst Academy. The first proposition, which was the subject of repeated deliberation by the Board, was limited to the establishment of a professorship in the Academy for the gratuitous education of pious young men who might be unable to defray the expenses of their own education. At a meeting on the 18th day of November, 1817, it was voted to attempt to raise a fund for the establishment of such a professorship ; and a committee, consisting of Rufus Graves, Esq. the Rev. Joshua Crosby, Rev. John Fiske, Nathaniel Smith, Esq. and Samuel F. Dickinson, Esq. was appointed "to solicit donations, contributions, grants and bequests" to constitute a fund "To afford instructions gratuitously to indigent young men of promising talents and hopeful piety, who shall manifest a desire to obtain a liberal education, with the sole view to the Christian Ministry."—Some attempts were made to procure donations for this purpose ; but without success. It was found that the establishment of a profes-

sorship for the purpose of educating young men for the ministry, was a project too limited to engage the patronage of the public. The committee, finding the Christian public well disposed to favor a plan of gratuitous education for pious young men, but on a more extended scale, and having taken the advice of many clergymen and laymen of distinction, residing in various parts of the commonwealth, determined to change the plan, and to frame a constitution for a fund, to be the basis of a Charitable Institution, distinct from the Academy. Such a constitution was formed and presented to a few gentlemen for subscription. This constitution was approved and subscribed by a few individuals—which encouraged the committee to hope that the plan would meet the general approbation of the Christian public. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees, August 18, 1818, the committee reported that constitution to the Board for their consideration and acceptance. On which it was unanimously voted, “That we approve of the doings of said committee and accept their report, and authorize them to take such measures and communicate with such persons and corporations, as they may judge expedient, and conducive to the great objects connected with their appointment, and that the Rev. Nathan Perkins and the Rev. Edward Whipple, be added to said committee.” The following extract from the constitution explains the views of the Board and the objects of the Institution.

“A constitution and system of by-laws for the raising and managing a permanent charitable fund, as the basis of an institution in Amherst, in the county of Hampshire, for the classical education of indigent young men of piety and talents, for the Christian ministry.”

“ Taking into consideration the deplorable condition of a large portion of our race who are enveloped in the most profound ignorance, cruel superstition and gross idolatry ; and many of them in a savage state, without a written language ; together with vast multitudes in Christian countries of which our own affords a lamentable specimen, who are dispersed over extensive territories, as sheep without a shepherd :—Impressed with the most fervent commiseration for our destitute brethren, and urged by the command of our divine Savior to preach the gospel to every creature ; we have resolved to consecrate to the Author of all good, for the honor of his name and the benefit of our race, a portion of the treasure or inheritance which he hath been pleased to entrust to our stewardship, in the firm belief, that “ it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

“ Under the conviction that the education of pious young men of the first talents in community, is the most sure method of relieving our brethren, by civilizing and evangelizing the world, and that a classical institution judiciously located and richly endowed with a large and increasing charitable fund, in co-operation with theological seminaries and education societies, will be the most eligible way of effecting it,

“ Therefore—we the undersigned have solemnly, deliberately and prayerfully made, constituted and ratified, and by these presents, and for the foregoing weighty considerations, do make, constitute and ratify, the following constitution and system of by-laws, together with the preceding preamble, as the basis of such a fund, and for raising and managing the same.

“ Art. 1. In contemplating the felicitous state of society, which is predicted in the Scriptures of truth, and

the rapid approach of such a state, which the auspices of the present day clearly indicate ; and desiring to add our feeble efforts to the various exertions of the Christian community, for effecting so glorious an event—we have associated together for the express purpose of founding an institution on the genuine principles of charity and benevolence, for the instruction of youth in all the branches of literature and science usually taught in colleges ; to be located in the town of Amherst, in the county of Hampshire, and incorporated with the Academy in that place, and with Williams College also, should it continue to be thought expedient to remove that seminary to said county of Hampshire, and to locate it in the town of Amherst.”

The provision in the latter clause was inserted in the Constitution, in consequence of some steps which the Trustees of Williams College had taken two or three years before on the subject of removing that institution to Hampshire county. The town of Amherst had been visited by a committee of that Board, who examined its situation and advantages for being the seat of the College, and it was considered that if the College should be removed to that town, a connexion between the proposed Charitable Institution and the College would be advantageous to both. The establishment of the Charitable Institution is not made dependent on the removal of the College to Amherst. On the other hand, it has always been expected that the institution was to be established, whether the College should be removed or not. Such is the plain meaning of the constitution.

In order however to ascertain the probability of such a removal, the Board of Trustees of Amherst Academy authorized the committee by the vote of August 18th,

above recited, to communicate with the Trustees of Williams College on the subject, and two of the gentlemen waited on them at their meeting in the first week of September following, and presented them with a copy of the Constitution and of the vote above mentioned, together with a letter inviting the union proposed. The Board of Trustees of Williams College returned the papers to the committee without any answer to the application.

This silence was considered as a refusal to accede to the proposition ; and on the report of the Committee to the Board of Trustees at Amherst ; the Board, on the tenth day of September following “ Resolved, that it is expedient to invite a convention of clergy and laity to approve and patronize the Charitable Institution contemplated by the Board.” In pursuance of this resolve, a circular letter was addressed to the settled Congregational and Presbyterian clergy in the counties of Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden, and in the western section of Worcester county, inviting them, each with a lay delegate, to meet in convention at Amherst on the 29th day of September, to deliberate on the subject. A delegate was also invited from each vacant Parish.

On the day appointed there appeared to be represented by settled ministers, or by lay delegates, or by both, as follows—in Hampshire county, 14 towns and 16 parishes. In Franklin county, 12 towns, and 14 parishes. In Hampden county, 4 towns, and 5 parishes. In Worcester county, 4 parishes. The whole number of clergymen present, were 37, of delegates, 32. Total, 69.

To this respectable convention, the Constitution of the proposed Charitable Institution was read, and by them was committed to a Committee of *twelve*, to consider and report. In their report, the Committee say, that “ The

plan of a literary institution founded on the general principles of charity and benevolence, to give a classical or collegiate education to indigent pious young men of talents, while it proposes the ordinary advantages to others, is peculiarly suited to the exigencies of the day, and calculated to answer extensively benevolent purposes in relation both to the church and the world. This plan proposes a literary institution of a peculiar character, in no way hostile to any other in our country." The committee further express their approbation of the "constitution, as a legal instrument, executed with skill and judgment, guarding, in the most satisfactory and effectual manner, the faithful and appropriate applications of the property consecrated by the donors."

On the subject of the location of the institution, the committee were not united; but they finally concurred in "cordially approving the object of a religious and classical institution on a charitable foundation"—but expressed an opinion that it would best flourish, if it could have "the advantage of that union, which would result from its location by a disinterested committee appointed by the convention." They also recommended "that suitable measures be adopted by this convention for the establishment of a college in connexion with the Charitable Institution."

The report was made to the convention, and after debate, the proposition for submitting the location of the institution to a committee was rejected by a great majority—and the articles of the report being amended were adopted in the following words.

1. "In this general view of the subject submitted to their consideration, the committee cordially approve the object of a religious and classical institution on a charita-

ble foundation in the town of Amherst, and recommend to the convention to give it their united and individual patronage.

2. " They also recommend that suitable measures be adopted by the Trustees of Amherst Academy, for the establishment of a college in connexion with the charitable institution, possessing all the advantages of other colleges in the commonwealth.

3. " That it is expected by this convention, that in order to satisfy the public, the people of the town of Amherst show themselves worthy of such an important privilege by affording seasonable and liberal aid towards erecting college buildings.

4. " They also recommend that such preparations and arrangements be made, as will accommodate students at the Institution as soon as possible."

Soon after these proceedings of the convention were published, the Trustees of Williams College were summoned to meet at Williamstown on the second Tuesday of November then ensuing—and the Trustees of Amherst Academy appointed a committee consisting of the Rev. John Fiske, Noah Webster and Nathaniel Smith, Esqrs. to repair to Williamstown, on that day, and communicate to the Board of Trustees of Williams College the result of the convention, with suitable explanations and statements. This was done.

At this meeting, the Board of Trustees of Williams College resolved that it was expedient to remove the College, on certain conditions—and appointed a respectable committee of disinterested men to determine the place to which it should be removed. This committee met in May, 1819, and determined that Northampton would be the most suitable place.

In consequence of these proceedings of the Corporation of Williams College, the Trustees of Amherst Academy suspended further measures in relation to the Charitable Institution ; until the event of the application of the Corporation of Williams College to the legislature for an act authorizing a removal of the College, should be known.—They made no opposition to that application, and took no measures to defeat it. But the petition having failed of success, the Board of Trustees of Amherst Academy judged that the way was open for the prosecution of their original design, and determined to put in operation the fund intrusted to their care. A committee has been appointed to erect a suitable building—and on the 9th instant, the Corner Stone was laid, with due solemnities, and in the presence of a great concourse of people.

As no part of the fund can be applied to defray the expense of buildings, and as the burden is too great for the inhabitants of a village, the friends of Christ are earnestly solicited to lend their mite to this important object; and to contribute also to the fund which is yet far too small to support an establishment commensurate with the wants of the public. The inhabitants of Amherst and of the neighboring towns, who are friendly to this institution, manifest a disposition to afford the most liberal aid, towards erecting the edifice—and if their Christian brethren in other parts of the country will devote a small portion of their property to this noble object, they will ensure the success of one of the most important institutions hitherto established among Christians.

**Photomount
Pamphlet
Binder**

Gaylord Bros., Inc.
Makers

Syracuse, N. Y.

PAT. JAN 21, 1908

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



57 882 790

